



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Public Affairs Section

Accredited in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu

For Immediate Release

June 26, 2013

Pacific Partnership Provides Medical Support and Training in Wewak and Vanimo



Australian Navy Medical Officer in Charge, Captain Greg, East Sepik Deputy Provincial Administrator Elizabeth Kaprangi, officials from the Provincial Health Department and the U.S. Navy's Lori Christensen at the official opening of the Pacific Partnership Mission's Health Expo in Wewak, East Sepik Province on June 15, 2013.

Vanimo, Papua New Guinea: More than 50 members of the U.S. Navy joined Australian and Japanese naval personnel in Vanimo on June 25 for Pacific Partnership 2013 (PP13) in Papua New Guinea. A U.S.-sponsored annual humanitarian and civic assistance mission aimed at strengthening international relationships with partner and host nations in the Asia-Pacific, Pacific Partnership arrived in Vanimo from Wewak, where the exercise was based for the last 10 days.

"This is an awesome mission that has two big benefits: It directly helps improve health and education services in communities and it fosters two way learning between civil and military professionals from across the Pacific," said Carlos Williams, U.S. Health Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby. "This exercise is a true partnership, bringing together the PNG Defense Force, the Department of Health, provincial government leaders, disaster relief agencies, hospitals, NGOs, and schools."

"Pacific Partnership is an excellent program," said Elias Kapavore, CEO of the Vanimo Provincial Hospital. "We will support this program enthusiastically."

The Australian ship, the HMAS Tobruk, is anchored prominently just off the Vanimo coast, and will be joined tomorrow by the Japanese destroyer, the JDS Yamagiri. More than 100 medical professionals from Papua New Guinea, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. are providing surgical, diagnostic, and medical expertise.

Pacific Partnership cooperates with regional governments and military to improve response during disaster relief operations while providing humanitarian, medical, dental, and engineering assistance. This year, the Australian Defense Force has taken the lead for the operation in East and West Sepik.

Supporting Inclusive, Sustainable, and Transparent Economic Growth in Melanesia

Tel: +675 321-1455

pdportmoresby@state.gov

<http://portmoresby.usembassy.gov>

Find us on Facebook: U.S. Embassy - Port Moresby

"More than 4000 people attended medical training workshops and attended health fairs," said Regina Chinsio-Kwong, a US Navy physician, who participated in the Wewak exercise.

At health fairs in Wewak, local community groups promoted preventative health care, disaster preparedness, and provided information to stop sexually transmitted diseases and Gender Based Violence. The Wewak Disaster Management Task Force was also launched during the Pacific Partnership.

"One of the greatest legacies of Pacific Partnership is the countless number of friendships that are forged with all Papua New Guineans," said Lori Christensen of the U.S. Navy. "We're ultimately here to learn from and support each other."

In addition to health programs, Pacific Partnership is contributing to engineering projects. "The response from the schools was overwhelmingly positive," said Australian Army Lieutenant David Bellas, overseeing engineering projects at two schools and a health clinic in Wewak.

"Students are still texting us thank you notes for refurbishing their classrooms." He is now leading four construction projects in Vanimo.

"We're privileged to have the Pacific Partnership in Vanimo," said Ashley Wayne of the PNG Defense Force. "Our medics look forward to joining you in the hospital, and we look forward to joining the construction effort."

Taking advantage of professional Rugby talent on the HMAS Tubruk, the Australian Navy will also conduct a three-day rugby clinic at Don Bosco School in Vanimo.

The last Pacific Partnership exercise in Papua New Guinea was in 2011, led by the U.S. Navy, working with local and regional partners to provide humanitarian assistance in Madang and Lae. Pacific Partnership formed following the massive 2004 Asian tsunami in which more than 230,000 in 14 nations died. Since 2006, Pacific Partnership has visited 15 countries, treated more than 300,000 patients and built over 130 engineering projects.

###

Supporting Inclusive, Sustainable, and Transparent Economic Growth in Melanesia

Tel: +675 321-1455

pdportmoresby@state.gov

<http://portmoresby.usembassy.gov>

Find us on Facebook: U.S. Embassy - Port Moresby